

## Developing an Understanding of Psychological Health of School Students in Pakistan

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### Abstract

In Pakistan, psychological health of students is burning issue. Unfortunately, it looks that no more concrete strategies have been developed to assess the psychological health of school students. Teachers have no more interest and potential to assess the psychological health of students. Because of the psychological sickness, secondary school students have been found in violent activities. Keeping in view stable and productive human resource, students mental health issues should be prioritized in Pakistan (Chaudhary, 2016, p-36-37). There is an absolute lack of data regarding mental health problems in students in Pakistan (Naqvi & Khan, 2007). Therefore, this paper explores the existing situation of psychological health of students and determines the factors behind the psychological sickness of students as well. The paper intends to analyze the latest situation of the prevailing variety of psychological disorders in the Punjab province by involving thirty participants from five major cities. The paper provides the recommendations for the school education department to upgrade the teaching and administrative policies for the psychological wellbeing of the students. The paper is important for the secondary school teachers in comprehending the existing psychological health of students.

**Keywords:** Psychological health, assess, secondary school students, Pakistan

### Introduction

Psychological sickness is an alarming situation worldwide. It has been reported that 30 percent to 50 percent of the world population may be suffering in some forms of mental illness (Mackenzie, Gekoski, & Knox, 2006). WHO reported that 10 percent to 20 percent of adolescents agonize from mental health problems worldwide (WHO, 2012a). It has been noted that stress in the period of adolescence is because of the presence of mental health difficulties including anxiety and depression (Feld & Shusterman, 2015). Various studies revealed that many previous studies revealed that younger adult are most inclined towards loneliness (Roux & Connors, 2001). Seepersad (2005) elaborated that loneliness has been particularly found among younger adults in age of 18 to 25. The psychological well-being has been defined as a psychological functioning and positive experience (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Corsano, Majorano & Champretavy (2006) identifies that a person with high score on psychological well-being promotes social relationship while persons who are victim of loneliness avoid social relations. Cohen and Wills (1985) presented models concerning the social relations and health. These models elaborates that stress badly affects the social relations of individuals. These models determine the relation of psychological and social relations among the individuals (Berkman & Glass, 2000). Miville & Constantine (2006) concluded in their study that social relations improved the psychological wellbeing of the individuals. The study was conducted on Mexican-American students of college. The psychological disorders have been significantly found in Muslim countries. For example, seventeen percent population in Egypt have been found in some forms of psychological disorder (Ghanem, Gadallah, Meky, Mourad, & El-Kholy, 2009). Similarly, psychological disorders have been observed in the population of United Arab (Abou-Saleh, Ghu-

bash, & Dardkeh, 2001). According to Ministry of Health in Malaysia regarding the psychological problems of students, it has been reported that among 400,227 patients with mental illness in 2008, 14.4% were adolescents (S. Roslan, et al, 2017,p-36). Thirukkovela & Dhanalakota (2015) concluded in a study on mental health among rural secondary school students in India that residential school students perceived more problems of mental health as compared to the non-residential school students. (P-5).

### ***Psychological Well Being of Students in Pakistan-General Overview***

Self-concept and self-esteem have been included in psychological well-being (Rosenberg, 1965). Campbell et al. (1976) identifies that psychological well-being is affiliated with the assessment of an individual's existing state of affairs. (Diener et al., 1999) described that mood and quality of life are also representative of psychological wellbeing of individuals. Kundi (2011) elaborates that in Pakistan children are victims of psychological problems as reported by Human Rights Commission. According to Chaudhary (2016) In Pakistan, this is the common perception that mental health problems are caused by black magic, evil spirits or other such supposedly supernatural forces. This is also in general practice that mentally sick person has been married just to recover him gradually from the mental disorders (p-36). In Pakistan, mental health problems in are likely to worsen because of lack of concrete mental health policy and minimum financial resources (Karim et al., 2004).

In doctoral study on challenging behavior in secondary schools in Pakistan, it has been concluded that challenging behavior has been found in those secondary school students who belonged to physical and psychological broken families. Except this, teachers are not well trained in identifying the students with challenging behavior. Students with challenging behavior are involved in the physical and sexual violence inside the schools (Khan, 2015, p-214). Challenging behavior can be noted from violent activities of students. Poverty has been found as a cause of challenging behavior in the secondary school students (Khan, 2015, p-215).

In Pakistan, in almost all schools and classes, children need special education support. Teachers should be trained about special education problems and issues (Hetland, 2016). <https://nation.com.pk/20-Oct-2016/psychosocial-wellbeing>. Alvarez (2007) indicates that teachers should be trained to create positive classroom climate to handle the aggressive behavior of students.

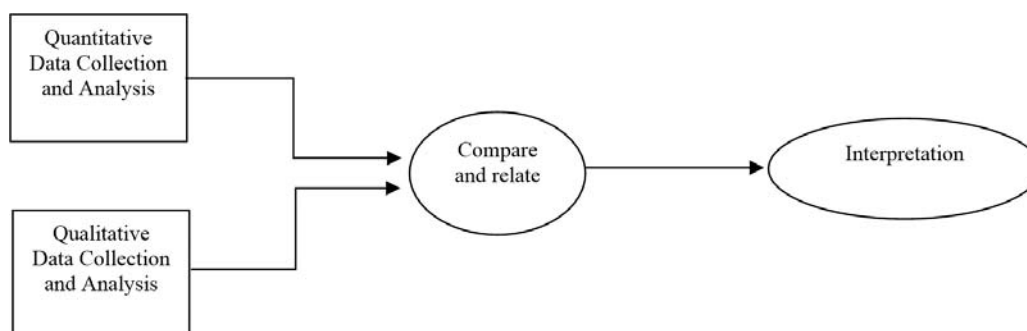
### ***Critical Discussion***

Several persons adopt negative attitudes about others because of mental health problems (Arrgarwal, 2012). From the previous two decades, greater numbers of students are looking forward help for their mental health issues (Gallagher, 2013). It has been reported that mental health issues in students negatively impact their potential to complete their academic work (Drum et al., 2009). In Pakistan, hospital services for the psychological patients are very poor (Ahmed, 2007). In Pakistan, approx. 4 percent annual budget has been allocated to overcome the psychiatric problems and issues in the (Khan, 2008). Several studies have concluded that socio-economic status of parents have influence on the mental health of the (Chan, 2010). Muhammad Ashar Malik et al (2016) highlighted that in Pakistan, approx. 45 percent of its population lives below or around the poverty and the mental health was included in the national health policy of 1998(p-156). According to parental acceptance-rejection theory Rohner & Khaleque (2005, 2013) parental acceptance-rejection has consistent effects on psychological adjustment of their children.

### ***Methodology***

For this study, thirty participants including fifteen educators and fifteen students were selected through random sampling technique from the secondary schools of Pakistan. Mixed method was used in the collection and analysis of data. Both interviews and questionnaire were used as tool

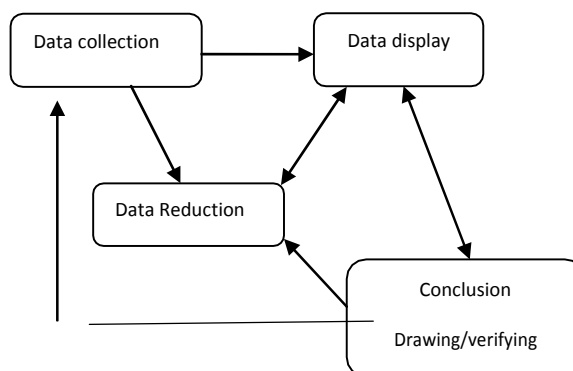
of research. Interviews were conducted from the students while questionnaire was distributed among the educators for the collection of data. Senior educators teaching at secondary school level in public sector secondary school has been consulted while students of 10<sup>th</sup> class in the same schools have been conducted. Convergent parallel design as well as Phillip model was used collectively in the analysis of collected data from the participants. A convergent parallel design involves to interpret the results of qualitative and quantitative data together (Creswell & Pablo-Clark, 2011).



**Figure 1. Convergent mixed parallel design.(Demir & Pismek, 2018, p-124).**  
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1179818.pdf>

Chi square was used for the analysis of quantitative data while Phillip model was used for the analysis of qualitative data to achieve the objectives of the study.

Miles & Huberman (1994) model for the thematic analysis of collected data was used to achieve the objectives of the study. This model consists of three link stages including data reduction, data display and data conclusion-drawing/verifying (Ibrahim, 2012, p-12). This model has been elaborated below.



**Figure 2. Miles & Huberman(1994) model for thematic analysis (Ibrahim, 2012,p-12).**  
<https://www.westeastinstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/ZG12-191-Mohammed-Ibrahim-Alhojailan-Full-Paper.pdf>.

## Results

Given below are the results of analysis of collected data from the participants included in sample of the study. These results represent the current situation of psychological disorder in the students in thematic categories.

**Table 1. Explication of the data content relating to the categories and sub-categories**

S. No	Psychological disorders-Contextualization of verbatim data	Verbatim quotes from interviews
1.	Sub-Category: Nature of Psychological disorders  Anxiety, stress, loneliness	“Psychological disorders among students are mostly observed inside and outside classes in the form of anxiety, stress and loneliness”. “Psychological disorders among students are mostly in the form of anxiety and stress”. “Anxiety is commonly found in the students”.
2.	Sub-Category: Causes of Psychological disorders  Psychological & physical broken families, poverty	“Psychological broken families are one of the major causes of psychological disorders in students”. “Psychological disorders among students are mostly in the form of anxiety and stress”. “Poverty is one of the major causes of psychological disorder in students.
3.	Sub-Category: Remedies of Psychological disorders  Psychological health revisions in teacher training programs	“ It’s essential to revise the teacher training programs regarding psychological health of students” “Teachers shoal be training concerning the existing psychological disorders”. “Teachers are mostly unaware about the psychological health of students”.

*Thematic Analysis-Deductive Coding of Nature Psychological Disorders***Table 2. Nature of Psychological Disorders**

S. No	Categories	Associated Concepts
1.	Psychological disorders among students	i. Anxiety while academic responses in classrooms. ii. Loneliness in school timings. iii. Stress in school timings.

*Thematic Analysis-Deductive Coding of Causes of Psychological Disorders***Table 3. Causes of Psychological Disorders**

S. No	Categories	Associated Concepts
1.	Family causes of psychological disorders among students.	i. Psychological broken families. ii. Physical broken families. iii. Family poverty.
2.	School causes of psychological disorders among students.	i. In-appropriate teacher training

*Thematic Analysis-Deductive Coding of Remedies of Psychological Disorders***Table 4. Remedies of Psychological Disorders**

S. No	Categories	Associated Concepts
1.	Family remedies of psychological disorders among students.	Parents awareness programs.
2.	School remedies of psychological disorders among students.	Revision of teacher training programs concerning psychological health of students.

**Implications and Contributions of the Study**

The study contributes to address the nature and causes of psychological health issues of secondary school students in Pakistan. In the light of conclusion of the study, policies and practices concerning psychological health of students can be revised.

**Conclusion**

Anxiety, stress and loneliness have been found in majority of the students. The study concludes that home climate of psychological and physical broken families are root causes of psychological disorder in their children. Poverty has also adverse affect on the psychological well being of students. Teachers are not well trained concerning the identification of psychological disorders in the students. No more strategies are in practice to overcome the psychological disorders of students in schools. The study concludes that the psychological health of the students is ignored by the parents and teachers. Therefore, there is an urgent need to develop and implement the strategies to identify and overcome the psychological disorders in students.

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